(b) if so, the details of points stated by the personalities in the said Assembly;

(c) whether the question of providing medical care to all the citizens in the country still remains a distant dream; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to address the situation?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) Yes.

(b) Broadly the discussions have been held on issues relating to Child Health, Support for Regulated Stem Cell Research, Conflict of Interest and Relations with Commercial Enterprises, Call for more investment in Public Health and Call for Nicaragua to give up total ban on abortion, etc.

(c) and (d) Medical Council of India Regulations have been reviewed and amended suitably with regard to land requirement, teacher-student ratio, etc. which will facilitate setting up of more medical colleges and also enhance the intake in Post Graduate Courses and Super-Specialities.

Post Graduate Medical Education Regulations have been amended to provide:

i. 50% reservation in Post Graduate Diploma Courses for Medical Officers in the Government service who have served for at least three years in remote and difficult areas; and

ii. Incentive at the rate of 10% of the marks obtained for each year in service in remote or difficult areas upto the maximum of 30% of the marks obtained in the entrance test for admissions in Post Graduate Medical Courses.

Besides, other regulations have also been rationalized.

Tackling swine flu surge

532. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

SHRI PRABHAT JHA:

SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether more than 214 confirmed cases of swine flu were reported till 10 September, 2009 across the country;

(b) whether World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned of a winter surge in viral infection in developing countries, including India and the South-East Asian countries;

(c) whether Government has seriously considered the WHO report of the shortage of vaccine; and

(d) whether Government is looking to build up its stockpile of vaccine to deal with influenza A (H1N1) or swine flu, as the death toll crosses 200 in the country?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) Yes, There have been 5611 laboratory confirmed cases of Influenza A H1N1 [swine flu] as on 10th September, 2009.

(b) World Health Organization has advised preparedness for a winter surge in influenza cases.

(c) and (d) Government of India is aware of the Global vaccine position and the WHO report. Government of India constituted a Committee under Secretary (Health Research) to address this issue. Regular meetings were held with potential Indian manufacturers and with those external sources from which vaccine can be imported.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is working on a two step strategy. Development of pandemic vaccine by indigenous manufacturers is being encouraged. Three companies (Serum Institute, Pune; Panacea Biotech; Gurgaon and Bharat Biotech, Hyderabad) are working towards this and it is expected that clinical trials would start in January 2010. If all goes well, indigenous vaccine would be available by June 2010.

To cover the interim period, Government of India is importing four million doses of Pandemic vaccine to vaccinate the high risk group. This vaccine would be available by December 2009.

Awareness against tobacco consumption among would be mothers

533. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI:

SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that tobacco consumption leads to reduced birth weight of the foetus, decreased gestational age leading to premature babies, increased risk of still births and chances of anemia among adult pregnant women;

(b) whether as a part of pre-natal education and during pregnancy check-up, such an awareness will be created in the local language or dialect of the area; and

(c) whether a well co-ordinated programme would be structured through joint efforts of Ministries of Health, Rural Development and Women and Child Development, which should have both vocal and illusrative components?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI S. GANDHISELVAN): (a) Yes, Sir, As per available evidence, tobacco consumption during pregnancy leads to reduced birth weight of the foetus, decreased gestational age leading to premature babies and increased risk of still births.

(b) Counselling on the tobacco consumption has been included in the Guidelines for ante-natal care and Skilled Attendance at Birth for Auxiliary Nurse cum mid wives, Lady Health Visitors and Staff Nurses.